

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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ABC Cites Three Clerks For Selling Alcohol To Minors

MONTEBELLO - Investigators of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) conducted a minor decoy operation in the city of Montebello and cited three individuals for selling alcohol to a minor. The actions were the result of a compliance check operation on February 24, 2006 in which a minor under the direct supervision of the investigators, attempted to purchase alcohol from 17 retail licensees in the city of Montebello. Three of the seventeen locations sold alcohol to the minor decoy. Investigators also arrested a person for having an open container in a vehicle.

Those who sell to a minor face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC will take administrative action against the business's liquor license. That may include a fine, a suspension of the liquor license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Young people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunk driving fatalities than the general adult population. Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is approximately 16 percent.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.